



## **Town of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department**



10 South Eagleville Road Storrs, CT 06268  
860-429-3015, 0  
[www.mansfieldcc.com](http://www.mansfieldcc.com)

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## **Mansfield Parks and Recreation Youth Basketball Parents and Coaches FAQ'S**

### **Operating Philosophy**

The Youth Basketball philosophy is to provide an enjoyable and safe program for children of all ability levels. Within the program environment it is essential that we provide participants with supervision, instructional coaching and officiating that is knowledgeable, demonstrates a positive attitude and has children best interest as its primary focus. The program strives to create an environment that promotes fundamental skill development, sportsmanship, teamwork and fun.

### **What is the difference between the recreation and competitive/travel divisions?**

- All players in the recreation division will make a team. Tryouts are required to earn a spot on the competitive/travel team.
- Typically we only field one competitive team per combine age group (grades 5&6 and grades 7&8). The final decision regarding the appropriateness in a given year to field an individual grade level will be made by the Parks and Recreation staff.
- Recreation divisions will play towns in close proximity to the Town of Mansfield. Presently, travel teams are a member of the NCCTBL with travel to games up to an hour drive from Mansfield. Recreation teams play mostly on Saturdays and travel teams could play up to two games each weekend.
- Regular practice in the recreation division is highly encouraged and includes one (and sometimes two) practices per week. There are no penalties for missing recreation practices but consistent attendance is expected. Attendance is expected to be consistent in the competitive/travel division with only important school or family obligations taking priority. Missing significant practices and/or games could result being dropped from a competitive team or limiting game time. Playing time is not a requirement of the league but we do strive to provide all players with meaningful game time minutes.

### **How are teams formed?**

#### Instructional (grades 3&4) Junior and Intermediate Recreation Divisions (Grades 5&6, 7&8)

- Results of skill evaluation day(s) are used to strive for the best team balance/ skill level – with the goal to provide as equal and fair competition as possible.
- We no longer honor teammate requests, carpool requests or requests for certain coaches as they often have a negative impact on team balance and play. Except for coaches own children, team requests are not honored. Before (if) there are more than two coaches placed on the same team careful assessment will be made to ensure the balance of the team will be consistent with other Mansfield teams.
- If you have a request to not be scheduled on a certain night for recreation division practices then you must make that request prior to the evaluation day. We will then try to do what is feasible to honor a request but it cannot be guaranteed.

### Competitive/Travel Division

- Two tryout dates will be set. Players must attend at least one tryout date to be considered for a team. A fair and consistent scoring method is used. Teams are typically 8-10 player maximums. The final number must be approved by Parks and Recreation staff.

### **What are skill evaluations?**

- Mandatory evaluation that begins in the Instructional league (grades 3&4) and continues in all upper grade levels. The goal is to determine pre-season skills levels of players utilizing a fair and consistent scoring method.
- Our goal is not to break up teams that have been playing together, our priority is to “level the playing field” to create balance in all programs.

### **Can my child play up?**

- Focus should be on fun, sportsmanship, teamwork, and basic fundamentals. However, some children tend to be bored if they are not challenge enough due to displaying exceptional early talent.
- Early exceptional talent is rare and we feel the desire to play up should be expressed by the child to the parent not the other way around. Occasionally, play-ups are permitted (4th grade and above). Only if/when a player displays exceptional skills or physical development that they can compete at an above average level in the age group no more than one grade ABOVE their present level/grade.... Why? Our goal is to build self-esteem & confidence in all players and ensure children are in a safe environment due to their physical development.

### **What is the wait list?**

- It is a list of participants who are waiting for a spot in a particular division.
- Payment will not be taken when placed on a wait list as the child is not registered at the time.
- We cannot guarantee a spot in a particular team but we do make every effort to not turn away a child that wants to participate.
- Officially wait listed children should attend player evaluations. However, we DO NOT accept walk ups of any kind on site for any competitive tryouts or instructional and recreation division evaluations.

### **How are practice nights determined?**

- We maximize any gym availability in the Mansfield Schools and E.O. Smith High School Gymnasiums. However, not all teams can practice in our earliest time slot of 6:00pm. Some teams will end practices as late as 9:00pm and priority for early time slots are given to our youngest grades until filled.
- Coaches availability for a scheduled practice night is another factor. We do not schedule teams to a practice night until our coaches meeting. If you have a request to not be scheduled on a certain night for recreation division practices then you must make that request prior to the evaluation day. We will then try to do what is feasible to honor a request but it cannot be guaranteed.
- Once practice nights are scheduled for the season they are fairly consistent but school functions and inclement weather can force some changes during the season.

### **How do I become a volunteer to coach?**

- We encourage coaches who have at least a basic level of knowledge of the game to come forward if they are supportive of the philosophy of the program and committed to helping the youth.
- Successfully complete the coach's application, written interview and associated background check.
- Complete two hour on line coaches certification training covering fundamentals of coaching and safety. This is paid for by MPRD and can be completed at home.
- We will then make assignments dependent upon needs for teams. Approved coaches will always be placed with their child's team.
- Attend mandatory coaches meeting(s) and coaches clinic(s)

- Be able to make a consistent commitment for the duration of the season
- Complete and successfully pass an annual background check
- Complete other required training (Concussion, NYSCA, other)

### **What commitments and responsibilities are involved in being a head coach?**

- Recreation division coaches typically hold practices one weeknight per week
- Attend one (sometimes) two games per weekend
- Attend a pre-season organizational meeting, player evaluations and selections
- Complete other required training (Concussion, NYSCA, other)
- Responsible for teaching skills, rules of the game, coaching during games, and communicating with parents and players.
- Working with MPRD to provide a safe playing environment and upholding the philosophy of the program.
- Depending upon the division it may require some travel to local towns. The competitive/travel division may travel up to one hour away.

### **What commitments and responsibilities are involved in being an assistant coach?**

- Many of the same responsibilities as the head coach but with less of commitment to time
- Must attend pre-season organizational meeting
- Complete other required training (Concussion, NYSCA, other)
- May have less knowledge of the game
- May not need to commit to every game or practice. Can fill in for head coach in their absence.